

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN EXTERNAL EXAMINATIONS: A STUDY OF SELECTED SCHOOLS IN OTA

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Abstract

A recent trend in Nigeria is the issue of poor academic performance of students of secondary schools in external examinations such as the National Examination Council and the West African Examinations Council. Major concern has centered on the quality of teachers and non-commitment of the students to their studies due to distractions that hamper learning but very little attention has been given to the learning environment. But the environment in which the students learn such as classrooms, libraries, technical workshops, laboratories, play grounds, conveniences, sanitation, maintenance culture, aesthetics among others are variables that affect students' learning and academic performance. Hence, the learning environment remains an important area that should be studied and well managed to enhance students' academic performance. This paper therefore examines the impact of learning environment on students' performance in external examination in secondary schools in Ota a major industrial town in Nigeria. Factors such as school facilities, class size, school location and school plant planning, aesthetics, maintenance culture, sanitation, conveniences would be examined to know their impact on learning and performance of secondary school students. A multiple data collection method including use of documented materials, distribution of questionnaire and interviews would be undertaken to test the hypotheses developed. Simple percentage statistical tool would be employed to analyze the variables.

Keywords: Learning Environment, Academic Performance, Secondary School, External Examination, Ota, Nigeria.

1 INTRODUCTION

The trend in Nigerian educational system is the issue of poor results in external examinations such as the West African Examinations Council and the National Examination Council as well as other organized examinations has raised concerns as to the factors responsible for this scenario. Though attention has been focused on the quality of teachers and non-commitment of the students to their studies due to distractions that hamper learning but very little attention has been given to the learning environment. But the environment in which the students learn such as classrooms, libraries and information centers, technical workshops, information and communication technology facilities, multi-purpose halls and performing art spaces, laboratories, health, physical exercises and play grounds, conveniences, sanitation, maintenance culture, aesthetics among others are variables that affect students' learning and academic performance. Hence, the learning environment remains an important area that should be studied and well managed to enhance students' academic performance. The fact that learning environment can impact on students academic achievement has been established by studies (Glassman 1994, Persaud and Turner 2008). The physical characteristics of schools have a variety of effects on teachers, students, and the learning process. Poor lighting, noise, high levels of carbon dioxide in classrooms, and inconsistent temperatures make teaching and learning difficult. Poor maintenance and ineffective ventilation systems lead to poor health among students as well as teachers, which lead to poor performance and higher absentee rates (Fraser 1985, Lyons 2001). These factors can adversely affect student behaviour and lead to higher levels of frustration among teachers, and poor learning attitude among students.

Beyond the direct effects that poor facilities have on students' ability to learn, the combination of poor facilities, which create an uncomfortable and uninviting workplace for teachers, combined with frustrating behaviour by students including poor concentration and hyperactivity, lethargy, or apathy, creates a stressful set of working conditions for teachers. Because stress and job dissatisfaction are common pre-cursors to lowered teacher enthusiasm, it is possible that the aforementioned characteristics of school facilities have an effect upon the academic performance of students.

Previous studies have investigated the relationship of poor school environment including problems with student-teacher ratio, school location, school population, classroom ventilation, poor lighting in classrooms, and inconsistent temperatures in the classroom with student health problems, student behavior, and student achievement (Crandell & Smaldino 2000; Stricherz, 2000).

This study examined the relationship between learning environment and student's academic performance in external examinations. What is the impact of learning environment on students' performance in external examination in secondary schools? Six secondary schools in Ota a major industrial town in south west, Nigeria were carefully selected for the study. Factors such as school facilities, class size, school location and school plant planning, aesthetics, maintenance culture, sanitation, conveniences would be examined to know their impact on learning and performance of secondary school students. A multiple data collection method including use of documented materials from the selected schools record of their students performance in external examination from 2009 to 2013 were collected where available. Interviews were conducted with top management personnel in the schools such as the principal or their designated lieutenants. The researchers observation through an on the spot inspection of the selected schools and still picture recording of the environment were also undertaken to answer the questions posed by the study. Simple percentage statistical tool and tables were employed to analyze the variables.

2 CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

2.1 Concept of Learning Environment

Many scholars have argued that learning environment are variables that can affect students' academic achievement, including performance in examinations (Ajayi, 2001 and Oluchukwu, 2000). The importance of learning environment to educational development was so upheld by the authorities and regulatory institutions that school inspectors were parts and parcel of the school system before the advent of military regime in the country. The neglect this aspect has received due to poor funding by the successive regimes of government in the country also reflected in paucity of studies that focuses on this issue. As such learning environment remains an important area that should be studied and well managed to enhance students' academic performance.

The recent poor academic performance of secondary school students in Nigeria has been of much concern to the government, parents, teachers and even student themselves. But the quality of education not only depends on the teachers performing their duties, but also in the effective coordination of the school's learning environment (Ajao, 2001)

Learning environment which include Classroom spaces planning, administrative places planning, circulation spaces planning, spaces for conveniences planning, general infrastructure planning, the teachers as well as the students themselves are essential in teaching-learning process. The extent to which students' learning could be enhanced depends on their location within the school compound, the structure of their classroom, availability of instructional facilities and accessories. It is believed that a school with adequate learning environment contributes to stir up expected outcomes of learning that will facilitate good academic performance, by encouraging effective teaching and learning.

2.2 Academic Performances

Academic performance refers to the degree of a student's accomplishment his or her tasks and studies. The most well-known indicator of measuring academic performance is grades which reflect the student's "score" for their subjects and overall tenure. Success is measured by academic performance in most educational institutions. In this case, how well a student meets standards set out by an institution itself or an external examination body either set up by the government or an independent outfit signifies success or good performance. Before standardization, teachers' observations made up the bulk of the assessment. Grading system that came into existence in the late Victorian period and were highly subjectivity as different teachers valued different aspects of learning more highly than others. However, standardization function which is fulfilled by establishments outside the schools helped in putting this in check considerably.

2.3 External Examinations

External examination is the assessment prepared by someone outside the faculty of the school where the examination is given. External examinations are developed by an entity outside schools. External

examination usually occurs at the end of schooling period or at a point of completion of secondary schooling. One thing that is very unique about external examinations is that it provides standardised assessment for the schools undertaking it. This ensures that important quality assurance process for curricula effectiveness and teaching, as well as fairness in selection based on education outcome.

In Nigeria, two major bodies have distinguished themselves in this task at middle-level education. They are the West African Examination Council (WAEC) and the National Examination Council (NECO).

WAEC was established in 1952 for four British colonies of Gold Coast (now Ghana), Nigeria, Sierra-Leone and the Gambia went ahead in 1951 to pass appropriate ordinances in their Legislative Assemblies accepting the Jeffery Report on the issue. The ordinances mandated WAEC to conduct examinations and award appropriate certificates in West Africa. Liberia joined the WAEC in 1974. The ordinances have now been replaced with the Convention which confers legal personality on WAEC as an international organization. As at now, WAEC conducts four categories of examinations as follows:

- International Examinations such as the WASSCE, SC/GCE O/Level and the HSC/GCE A/Level.
- National Examinations such as the Senior School Certificate, Technical, Business Studies, and Common Entrance Examinations;
- Examinations conducted in collaboration with other examining bodies, such as City and Guilds of London Institute, and the Royal Society of Arts; and
- Examinations conducted on behalf of other examining bodies, such as University of London GCE examination for non-West Africans, Scholastic Aptitude Test and Graduate Record Examinations for Educational Testing Service, Princeton, USA and JAMB Examination in countries outside Nigeria.

NECO on another hand was established by the military administration of Abdulsalam Abubakar in April 1999. it should however be noted that the decree of April 1999 establishing NECO a consequence of over two decades of calls and agitations to allow for an opportunity for choice of examination body for candidates to patronize. Its mandate was to take over the responsibilities of the National Board for Educational Measurement (NBEM) created, in 1992, by the Ibrahim Babangida administration, although its enabling decree was promulgated in 1993. However, the conduct of the Senior School Certificate Examinations (SSCE) which had, hitherto, been the exclusive preserve of the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) was made an additional responsibility of the new examination outfit. NECO was to take exclusive charge of the conduct of the SSCE for school based candidates while WAEC was to take charge of the same examination for private candidates. NECO conducted its maiden SSCE in mid- 2000.

3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES, QUESTIONS AND PROPOSITION

3.1 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the relationship between learning environment and academic performance of secondary students in external examinations.

Other objectives include;

To compare learning environments in selected public and private secondary schools and the relationship on the academic performance in external examinations.

To examine the degree to which learning environment contributes to academic achievement of secondary schools in Ota.

3.2 Research Questions

Is there any relationship between learning environment and academic performance of secondary school students in external examination?

To what degree does learning environment differs in Ota secondary schools and what is the relationship to students' performance in external examinations?

To what extent does learning environment contribute to academic achievement of secondary schools in Ota?

3.3 Research Propositions

There is significant relationship between learning environment and the academic performance of secondary school students in external examinations.

There is significant difference between learning environment in secondary schools in Ota.

Learning environment contribute significantly to academic achievements in secondary schools.

4 LITERATURE REVIEW

Education remains the bedrock of development but in Nigeria, there is consensus about the falling educational standards (Adesehinwa, 2013:153; Olorundare, 2011:3; Blumende, 2001: 87 cited in Akinsolu, 2010). The poor performance of secondary school students in different subjects as observed in the yearly results of Senior School Certificate Examination conducted by WAEC and NECO which are external bodies justifies this claim of dwindling academic performance of secondary school students in both internal and external examinations (Ajayi, Hasstrup & Osalusi 2010, Unanma, Abugu, Dike & Umeobika 2013)..

The increasing fall in the quality of manpower and the negative implication of this on the posterity of Nigeria is making this issue of learning environment and academic performance a concern (Aremu, 2000 cited in Unanma, Abugu, Dike & Umeobika, 2013: 5). Lawrence (2012:210) establishes a relationship between education and nation-building. Specifically, Alimi, Ehinola & Alibi (2011:44) and Komba, Hizza and Winledy (2013) posit that secondary school is pivotal in human capital formation and development. Put differently, secondary education is an instrument for national development in that it moulds and forms the individual who after advances the society (National Policy on Education, 2004 cited in Unanma, Abugu, Dike & Umeobika, 2013:5). More so, secondary schools are important because tertiary institution draws their students. Thus, the essence of secondary education is to lay the foundation for further study at a higher level. However, Obemeata (1995) as cited in Adepoju & Oluchukwu (2011:316) pathetically observes that about 93% of secondary school leavers in any given year do not qualify to gain admissions into higher institution for university education. This is because according to Sam (2011) cited in Olorundare (2011:3), yearly there is a below average performance of thousands of students in examination conducted by NECO and WAEC where only 20%of the candidates pass at acceptable credit level. Asides the failure rate, the complaints also covers that secondary schools are not meeting the expected end of producing quality students.

Various studies have pointed various factors as having the predominant impact on the performance of students in external examinations. For instance, for Akinsolu (2010: 87) is of the view that teachers are the main determinants of academic performance. Other factors according to Adepoju & Oluchukwu (2011:315), Unanma, Abugu, Dike & Umeobika (2013: 6), Akinsolu (2010), Komba, Hizza and Winledy (2013) include a moderate student teacher ratio, the commitment of teachers, good learning environment, student classroom attendance, parents and teachers communication, availability of reliable libraries and laboratories, parents influence on children and family environment, leadership of the principal, teachers adequacy and competency and parental education.

In this study, attention will focus on examining the impacts of learning facilities on academic performance of secondary school students. Learning environment is defined as the physical characteristics of a school. According to Bosque and Dore (1998) cited in Kamaruddin, Zainal & Aminiddin (2009:171), learning and teaching environment ought to inform, communicate, collaborate, produce, scaffold and manage. Furthermore, Bosque and Dore (1998) cited in Kamaruddin, Zainal & Aminiddin (2009:171) explains that learning environment encompasses a wide range of components and activities within which learning occurs. On the other hand, Alimi, Ehinola & Alibi (2011:44) defines facility as the space, interpretation and physical expression of the school curriculum. Put differently, facilities are everything used directly and indirectly for the benefit of education. Sabitu, Babatunde & Oluwole (2012:45) explains that facilities are made up of blocks of classrooms, staffrooms, laboratories, workshops, libraries, laboratory, consumables, water, chairs and tables amongst other things. Following this, it is obvious that these facilities form the learning environment.

Various studies have conducted on the influence of infrastructural facilities on student performance in Nigeria. The overall effects of learning environment on academic performance of secondary school student in external examinations can be positive or negative. While some researchers show that there is no relationship between the variables, other researches show that there is a relationship between learning environment and the performance of students. According to Ayodele (2004) Cited in

Adeyemo (2012: 21), Global green USA (2005) cited in Lumpkin (2013: 1), Sabitu, Babatunde & Oluwole (2012), Adepoju & Oluchukwu (2011:315), Alimi, Ehinola & Alibi (2011:44), Lawrence (2012:210), Earthman (2002:1), Kamaruddin, Zainal & Aminuddin (2009) and Teachernet (2008) cited in Ajayi, Ekundayo & Osalusi (2010) argue that the availability and quality of educational facilities such as school buildings, classrooms, chairs, tables, laboratories etc have positive impacts of the academic performance of students. This means that the school environment determines how much learning and teaching will be possible. However, Sabitu, Babatunde & Oluwole (2012:45) adds that the availability of the facilities must be mixed with a skilful usage of them so as to aid teaching and learning.

Moore (2008) cited in Lumpkin (2013: 3), explains that students' achievement is lower in schools with deficient building and in improved ones, the results were better. Moore (2008) as cited in Lumpkin (2013: 2), further explains that the need for good environment is not in isolation from other factors. Good learning environment must be blended with good standard, qualified teachers, good management to achieve good academic performances of students in examinations. Roberts, Edgerton and Peter (2008), arguing from a psychological is of the view that there is a psychological relationship between the nature of the school facility and those that are within the environment that is both teachers and students. However, they further explain that for effective learning to occur there should be a synergic relationship between high moral, commitment and enthusiasm and high learning there will be effective learning (cited in Lumpkin, 2013: 3).

Sabitu, Babatunde & Oluwole (2012) and Alimi, Ehinola & Alibi (2011:44) assert that in Nigeria, private schools are better than public school in terms of human and physical facilities which make parents enrol their wards there. Ajayi, Hasstrup & Osalusi (2010: 137) and Komba, Hizza and Winledy (2013:10) further opine that the limited human and physical facilities in public schools have made parents lose faith in them. The loss of faith has necessitated parental caution in choosing schools for their wards attend without minding the cost and geographical implications as long as their wards pass their external examinations and gain admission into institutions of higher learning whether university, polytechnic or teachers' training colleges. In fact, Adepoju (2002) as cited in (Adepoju & Oluchukwu, 2011:323) mentions that the choice of school is majorly to increase students chances of passing English and mathematics in SSCE. Sabitu, Babatunde & Oluwole (2012:44) posits that result show that most of the students that gain entry into higher institutions are from private secondary schools.

Another different argument was put forward by Ajayi (1998), Adepoju (2002) and Owioye (2000) that despite the efforts at ensuring educational training facilities available and making students have equal educational opportunities so as to improve their performance in both internal and external examinations, there are evidences of poor performance of students recorded in public examinations like senior school certificate examinations (SSCE) and NECO (all cited in Adepoju & Oluchukwu, 2011:315). That is to say, despite this claim improvement in infrastructural facilities did not positively impact academic performance.

Based on the aforementioned, this study examines the relationship between school facilities / learning environment and academic performance in external examinations WAEC and NECO specifically in selected secondary school in Ota, Ogun State.

5 BRIEF OVERVIEW OF OTA

Ota is the headquarters of Ado-Odo/Ota Local Government Area in Ogun State of Nigeria. The LGA is located within the tropical on a land area covering 1,263 square kilometres out of which 1,010.4 square kilometres is plain land, whereas about 252.6 square kilometre of dreadful terrain 16% of which is water covering and 4% lily region.

Ado-Odo/Ota LGA which was created May 29, 1989 by the Ibrahim Babangida military administration was carved out of the splitting of the defunct Ifo/Ota Local government and merging it with Ado-Odo/Igbesa areas of the former Yewa South Local Government Area.

Ado-Odo/Ota LGA, shares boundaries with Lagos State in the South, Yewa South and Ifo LGA in the west and Ipokia LGA in the North.

The LGA according to the 2006 census report has a population of 527,242 out of which 261,523 are male, whereas 265,719 are female. There are about 450 estimated towns, villages and settlements in the LGA inhabited mainly by the Aworis, the Eguns and Yewas as well as Egbas. To an extent Ota is fast becoming a cosmopolitan centre due to the number of industrial establishment, religious institution and proximity to Lagos. Apart from the concentration of industries, the LGA is also agrarian in nature, the people engage in production of crops such as cocoa, kolanut, palm oil, coffee, cassava, timber, maize and vegetables. The LGA also boasts of mineral resources such as Kaolin, Silica sand, gypsum and glass sand.

The uniqueness of Ota which is the foremost township in the LGA is its strategic location between Lagos, the commercial nerve centre of Nigeria to the south, Idiroko an important international border town to the west and Abeokuta, the capital of Ogun state to the north.

6 METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a multiple data collection method including use of documented materials from randomly selected six secondary schools in Ota. The schools are three public schools namely Ansarudeen Secondary school, Igamode secondary school and Iju Ebiye secondary school established in 1981. Also in the sample are three private schools including Faith Academy founded in 1999, Bells secondary school founded in 1993 and Ambassadors secondary school founded in 2000. Records of students performance in external examination from 2009 to 2013 available in these schools were collected. Interviews were also conducted with top management personnel in the schools such as the principal or their designated lieutenants. The researchers observation through an on the spot inspection of the selected schools and still picture recording of the environment were also undertaken to provide answer to the questions posed by the study. Tables and descriptive analysis were employed to analyze the variables.

7 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Recently in the last decade or two, students' performance in external examination has been poor, giving parents, government and stakeholders concern. Among the reasons have been learning environment. The current study examines the state of learning environment and infrastructure, together with the extent to which they are being maintained. Sound learning environment serves as a catalyst for effective teaching leading to high academic performance of both students and schools. The quality of infrastructure and learning environmental conditions has strong bearing to academic performance among students. In our study we examined some of these variables and their influence on performance of schools. Learning infrastructure include the buildings, furniture items, equipment, classrooms, offices, libraries or laboratories, conveniences and sporting equipment that contribute to a positive learning environment and quality education for both schools and students. Nigerian secondary schools are dilapidated and inadequate to provide quality educational services particularly public schools. The quality of learning facilities available within an educational institution has positive affect the quality of teaching and learning activities which in turn leads to the attainment of good performance. The quality of the school buildings and furniture will determine how long other such inputs will last whereas comfortable classrooms and provision of correct learning inputs will not only improve teaching quality but also increase the extent of students' academic performance. Classrooms in most of the public schools were inadequate in terms of decency, spacious, ventilation and other items like furniture/ chairs, desks, boards that should be available in an ideal classroom. Even the learning infrastructure such as building, furniture and equipment that contribute to good learning environment and better quality of education are lacking. The effects of deteriorating conditions and poor maintenance of school infrastructure are threats to students' academic performance, reflecting poor grade performance in external examination such as School Certificate Examination conducted by the West African Examination Council.

TABLE 1: LEARNING ENVIROMENT FOR THE VISITED SCHOOLS.

NAMES OF PRIVATE SCHOOLS	TEACHING FACILITIES					
	Laboratory	Library	Classroom	Sports	Infrastructure	Maintenance of facilities
*School A	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Fair
**School B	Good	Fair	Good	Fair	Good	Fair
***School C	Good	Good	Good	Fair	Good	Fair
NAMES OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS	TEACHING FACILITIES					
	Laboratory	Library	Classroom	Sports	Infrastructure	Maintenance of facilities
****School D	Poor	Poor	Poor	Fair	Poor	Poor
*****School E	Fair	Fair	Poor	Fair	Fair	Poor
*****School F	Poor	Poor	Poor	Fair	Fair	Poor

*Faith Academy **Ambassador *** The Bells; **** Iju Ebiye ***** Iganmode ***** Ansar ru deen

INDEX: 1= Poor; 2 = Fair; 3 = Good.

The above index status was derived through the availability of variables that make up the learning environment and such indices were gathered as researchers visited the selected schools.

For Laboratory, having all the seven variables (-Water supply, Burners, Chemicals, White board, Fans, Exhaust and Light) puts the school in 'Good' status; 3/4 variables places the school in the 'Fair' Category and anything below three variables accords the school "Poor" status. Similarly all the other statuses were developed based on our observation of these schools; Library (- Sufficient books on various subject, sound arrangement of the library/space, Shelves, Library attendants, Tables and chairs, Fans or air conditioners); Classroom (-White board and marker, Blackboard and chalks, Number of desk, Student/teacher ratio, Fan and Ventilation); Sports (Sport Director or coach, Football field, Athletic field, Basketball court, Sport equipments and first aid box; Infrastructure {- housing, Sufficient space, Fans, Air conditioners, Light, Type of building structure (-Mud, block, Brick, Staff Room, Standby generator, Aesthetics (such as flowers, arts works, frames, drawings and paintings), Student common room with TV for news, entertainment and social learning)); and Maintenance of facilities (Parents Teachers Association (PTA), State of the facilities, Toilets facilities, Stable water supply, State of the compound, Frequency in cutting the grass, adequate games and recreational facilities Cleanliness of the environment, State of the staffroom/Common room and State of the classroom).

Among the schools visited, the private schools have better infrastructure than the public secondary schools-see Table 1. Other learning environment includes offices, conveniences, sporting equipment and fields, aesthetic surroundings and maintenance culture. A good school indulges in building better learning environment which enables the students to excel especially in external examinations. In schools we visited, classrooms, student – class ratio, cleanliness, staff room, libraries, laboratories and conveniences are all better off in private schools than in public schools. Private schools have aesthetic environment and excellent maintenance culture when compared with their counter parts in public settings. Among the private schools or private schools there exist wide variations in the levels of teaching facilities and environment. It may be noted here that high levels of students' academic performance in external examination setting may not be guaranteed where instructional inputs such as good classrooms, libraries, laboratories, sanitation, recreational facilities are lacking; as these inadequacies make teaching and learning less conducive and jeopardize good academic performance of students especially in external examination.

Relating the learning environment to performance showed wonderful relationship. The study revealed combined influence of deteriorating conditions of building, pressures on teaching facilities and learning environment deficiencies impair on the quality of teaching and learning and also create health and safety problems for staff and students as well as the overall performance of students in general. The effects of deteriorating condition and poor maintenance of school infrastructure are threats to the

school and students' academic performance. The results of Senior School Certificate Examination conducted by the West African Examination Council were extremely poor among public secondary schools compared to private secondary schools in Ota. The percentages of student's performance in external examinations are given in table 2.

TABLE 2 ACADEMIC PERFORMANCES IN EXTERNAL EXAMINATIONS FROM 2009-2013.

S/N	NAME OF SCHOOL	NAME OF EXAM	OVERALL RESULT	YEAR 2009	YEAR 2010	YEAR 2011	YEAR 2012	YEAR 2013
1	School A	WAEC	Pass	92.37%	100%	100%	99.6%	99.6%
			Fail	2.9%	0%	0%	0.47%	0.40%
2	School B	WAEC	Pass	83%	—	—	98.08%	100%
			Fail	17%	—	—	1.92%	0%
3	School C	WAEC	Pass	98%	95.1%	83.5%	91.6%	96.4%
			Fail	2%	4.9%	16.5%	8.4%	3.6%
4	School D	WAEC	Pass	60.4%	0.9%	2.38%	24%	21.1%
			Fail	39.6%	99.1%	97.62%	76%	78.9%
5	School E	WAEC	Pass	63.5%	82.8%	73%	87.2%	77.73%
			Fail	36.5%	17.2%	27%	12.8%	22.27%
6	School F	WAEC	Pass	—	—	—	32.06%	—
			Fail	—	—	—	67.94%	—

Pass: Candidates with 5 credits and above and having Higher Education Potentials (HEP).

Fail: Candidates below 5 credits

School A - Faith Academy, Canaanland, School B: The Ambassadors College Ota, School C: The Bells, School D: Iju Ebiye High School, School E: Iganmode Grammar School Ota, School F: Ansar ru deen comprehensive College, Ota



Fig. 1 Igamode Grammar Sch.



Fig. 2 Ansarudeen Comp. Coll.



Fig. 3 Iju Ebiye High Sch.



Fig. 4 The Bells Sec Sch.



Fig. 5 Faith Academy.



Fig. 6 Ambassador Coll.

8 DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

The quality of infrastructure and learning environmental conditions has strong bearing to academic performance among students. In our study we examined some of these variables and their influence on performance of schools. Learning infrastructure include the building, furniture, equipment, classroom, library or laboratory that contribute to a positive learning environment and quality education for both schools and students. The quality of learning facilities available within an educational institution has positive affect on the quality of teaching and learning activities which in turn leads to the attainment of good performance. The quality of the school buildings and furniture will determine how long other such inputs will last. Among the schools visited, the private schools have better infrastructure than the public secondary schools-see Table 1. Other learning environment includes offices, conveniences, sporting equipment and fields, aesthetic surroundings and maintenance culture. A good school indulges in building better learning environment which enables the students to excel especially in external examinations. In schools we visited, classrooms, student – class ratio, cleanliness, staff room, libraries, laboratories and conveniences are all better off in private schools than in public schools. Private schools have aesthetic environment and excellent maintenance culture when compared with their counter parts in public settings. Among the private schools there exist wide variations in the levels of teaching facilities and environment.

Relating the learning environment to performance showed wonderful relationship. The study revealed in public schools, combined influence of deteriorating conditions of building, pressures on teaching facilities and learning environment deficiencies impair on the quality of teaching and learning and also create health and safety problems for staff and students as well as the overall performance of students in general. The effects of deteriorating condition and poor maintenance of school infrastructure are threats to the school and students' academic performance. The results of Senior School Certificate Examination conducted by the West African Examination Council were extremely poor among public secondary schools compared to private secondary schools in Ota. The percentages of student's performance in external examinations are given in Table 2. The awful performance of students in external examinations among the public schools had been largely attributed to inadequate learning and teaching facilities in addition to inadequate learning environment. The study also found big gap in quality, resulting from large number of students in crowded classrooms in public schools, using inadequate and obsolete equipment and perhaps with disillusioned tutors. The combined effect of these deficiencies which range from poor laboratories, library, classroom, sports, infrastructure and maintenance of facilities perhaps constituted a major hiccup in the quality of learning environment and thus result to poor academic performance among students in external examinations.

9 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that the learning environment in secondary schools in Nigeria has significant relationship with academic performance of secondary school students. It was also concluded in the study that private secondary schools in Ota within the scope of the study provides better learning environment than their public sector counterpart, more so the public secondary school which accommodate more student population suffers from infrastructural neglect as the principal do not control any budget even to maintain the existing structure.

Hence, the study recommends provision of facilities like modern laboratories, functional libraries, and comfortable classrooms for better academic performance; in addition to effective maintenance or renovation of old buildings, chairs, desks, recreational equipment among others should be part and parcel of the schools system. The Ogun state government and largely state governments in Nigeria should pay more attention to education by providing the necessary funds to the principals and school administrators to not only provide necessary learning facilities but maintain existing structures, while a board at the level of the state government can be established to regulate private schools to ensure that standards are maintained.

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APPENDIX 1 PICTURE GALLERY OF SELECTED SCHOOLS



F1 Igamode Gram Sch Comp.



F2 Iju Ebiye High Sch Comp.



F3 Ansarudeem Comp.



F4 The Bells Sport Ground.



F5 Ambassador Sport Field.



F6 Iju Ebiye Toilet/Field.



F7 The Bells Classroom.



F8 Faith Academy Classroom.



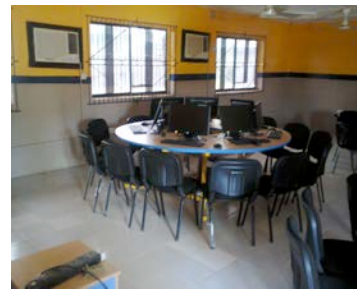
F9 Iju Ebiye Classroom.



F10 Ambassador Lab



F11 Faith Academy Lab



F12 Igamode Comp Lab



Lab F13 Faith Academy Lib.



F14 Igamode Lib.



F15 Faith Academy Chem Eqpt.



F16 Ambassador Lib.



F17 Igamode Lib.



F18 Ambassador Gen Set.